



City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia

Alexandria Waterfront Committee
Department of Recreations, Parks and Cultural Activities
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria Virginia 22314



November 18, 2010

The Honorable William D. Euille
Mayor of Alexandria
City Hall
301 King Street, Room 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille:

This letter summarizes the recommendations of the Alexandria Waterfront Committee on Waterfront-related budget priorities for the City's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The Waterfront Committee recognizes that FY12 is likely to be another challenging budget year for Alexandria. This follows several years of weak revenue growth that have resulted in reduced operations and deferred capital expenditures by the City. With this dismal fiscal outlook in mind, we have prioritized our budget recommendations as follows:

- **Immediate needs:** These are recommendations regarding mission-critical expenditures that should be included in the FY12 Budget and CIP
- **Near-term priorities:** These recommendations reflect expenditures that should be addressed over the next five years, as resources permit

Recommendations for both of these categories are summarized below. In addition, we have provided one recommendation regarding a potential revenue opportunity.

Immediate Needs

- **General Infrastructure Investment:** The Waterfront relies on safe, functional infrastructure to serve the thousands of residents, workers, and visitors who live, work, and play near the river each day. The City should continue to invest in general infrastructure improvements that benefit the Waterfront and its environs, including such projects as mitigation of combined sewer overflows, sewer separation projects, and reconstruction of sanitary sewers; maintenance of shared-use paths (including the Mount Vernon Trail); and street improvements such as street and alley reconstructions and miscellaneous undergrounding.
- **Repair of City Marina Seawalls:** The City's FY11 CIP programs \$1.7 million for repair of City Marina Seawalls in FY16 and FY17. As the FY11 CIP states, "The seawalls at the City Marina have suffered 20+ years of erosion and environmental damage due to tidal change and the absence of a breakwater."

[This] condition has allowed surrounding water to wash away soils, resulting in dangerous voids in the seawalls that require repair. During the 2008 marina dredging project, areas on the North and South seawall were too tenuous to allow dredging within a reasonable vicinity of the seawalls. If the seawalls are to withstand future storms and daily stresses they must be repaired” (p. 6-36). Given the dangerous conditions and the operational impacts on the Marina of this damaged infrastructure, repair should be prioritized and funded earlier than FY16 and FY17.

- **Marina and Founders Park Lighting:** Twelve decorative outdoor lights at the City Marina and Founders Park were destroyed by the microburst storm on August 5, 2010. The replacement value of the lights and poles is \$4,000. Staff recommends replacement of the damaged lights with identical fixtures for consistency with existing lights and to avoid necessitating re-approval of replacements by the Board of Architectural Review. The City self-insures replacement of such infrastructure, but no funds were available from the FY11 budget for replacement of these lights. Funding should be allocated in FY12 to ensure that the damaged lights are replaced as soon as possible. Beyond aesthetics, the absence of these lights poses a safety hazard for all who use the Marina and Founders Park.

Near-term priorities

- **Park Planning, Park Operations & Maintenance, and Marina Operations Staffing:** Over the past several years, staffing of Waterfront parks and the Marina has been reduced such that parks supervisors are unable to fill all available work shifts. As revenues permit, the budget should fund additional staffing required to fill available shifts.
- **City Marina Maintenance Boat:** The City’s FY11 Budget included \$47,000 in funding for a replacement maintenance boat, but funds will instead be applied to repair or replace the mold-damaged Dockmaster’s Hut at the Marina. The need for a work boat still exists as the Marina’s previous craft has been retired after years of heavy-duty use. Without this tool, City staff has no means of conducting water-side inspection and repairs of Marina facilities.
- **Security:** Prior to the recent budget crisis, the City funded two security guards at the City Marina during the overnight hours. Presently, only one guard is funded. The Waterfront Committee has previously urged the City to install gates at the foot of each Marina pier to limit unauthorized individuals’ access to boats after hours. The Committee understands that installation of the gates is not warranted at this time, given the forthcoming adoption of the Waterfront Plan. In lieu of installing gates, however, the Committee recommends reinstatement of the second security guard as funding permits.
- **Sidewalk Maintenance:** The City annually includes an allocation for sidewalk repair and maintenance. It is vital that funding of this program is retained and augmented as funds permit to ensure the proper maintenance of sidewalks Citywide and especially along its crown jewel, the Potomac Waterfront.
- **Windmill Hill Park Improvements:** Council adopted a concept plan for Windmill Hill Park in 2003, but as of yet, limited improvements to the park have been made. The City’s FY11 CIP programs repair of the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead in FY16 and FY17, which would result in completion a full 14 years after adoption of the concept plan. The Waterfront Committee urges the City to identify near-term funding for implementation of less-costly portions of the Windmill Hill Park Concept Plan, and to identify Commonwealth or Federal funding for bulkhead repairs that could expedite the timeframe for completion of this project.
- **Waterfront Plan Implementation:** The City’s FY11 CIP programs \$10,000 for implementation of the Waterfront Plan beginning in FY20. The Waterfront Committee understands that funding for implementation prior to FY20 was not programmed because the adoption date of the Waterfront Plan

was not known at this point in last year's budget cycle. City staff now anticipates adoption of the Waterfront Plan by spring 2011; even if this schedule slips, capital programming funds should be allocated so that implementation of the plan may begin promptly upon adoption.

Revenue

- ***Transient boater fees:*** Marina staff should review the rate structure for transient boats to dock at the Alexandria City Marina. The Alexandria City Marina provides a premium docking location for boaters, with cultural attractions, shopping, and hundreds of restaurants within a short walk or free trolley ride from the water. When the City decreased the number of docking spaces available for transient boaters earlier this year, several local boating organizations commented that there was high demand for a scarce number of docking spaces in Alexandria. This indicates that there is a consumer surplus that may be tapped in the form of higher docking fees for transient boaters, especially during periods of high-demand such as weekends and holidays. Such action is consistent with Council's recent decision to increase on-street metered automobile parking rates in Old Town. The additional revenue generated from higher docking fees would decrease the City's annual subsidy of Waterfront capital and operating costs paid from General Fund revenues.

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We appreciate the opportunity to comment on Alexandria's FY12 budget priorities. If you would like to discuss this matter, please contact me at 202/365-2927 (mobile) or natemacek@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,



Nathan M. Macek, Chair
Alexandria Waterfront Committee

CC: Alexandria City Council
James K. Hartmann, City Manager
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